Nubile girls, during their "tiwheti," must approach the *oxen kraal* and look at them. The cattle might suffer, be attacked by a bad cough (mukhulwane), get thin! This taboo is instituted to protect the oxen, not the human inhabitants of the village, as D. Kidd says is the case amongst the Zulus. (Part IV. Ch. I. E.) When women have passed the time of child-bearing, most of the taboos cease, and they can eat monkeys and porcupine if they wish!

3) The first year of married life.

I shall not return to the subject of marriage rites, which have been fully explained in the preceding chapter. Let me say that, though a Thonga woman cannot imagine life without marriage (ku kandja bukati), she does not enter on the new state with any enthusiasm. Her parents have warned her that she will be illtreated, accused of witchcraft and adultery, etc. Her sisters bewail her fate on her wedding day in song. The fact that she has been paid for, though it does not constitute an actual sale, puts her in an inferior position (See Part II).

During the first year, she has no *ndangu*, viz. no fire-place of her own. She cooks for her mother-in-law. During the three first weeks the husband eats with her and with the girl who accompanied her to her new home. Afterwards, he goes back to eat with the men. In some places it would seem that the husband eats with her the whole year, until she has her own pot (hlembeto).

4) Husband and wife.

What are the relations between husband and wife after the honey-moon? Of course they vary very much according to the character of both. As a rule however, the married people have very little intimacy with each other; the man remains with his companions on the "bandla," the village square where they meet, and only occasionally comes into the "ndangu," the reed enclosure of the fire-place, which is the true domain of the

places the food (phamela) on plates of the size of small basins or dishes (mbenga). We have seen how she distributes it amongst the inhabitants of the village. When all have finished eating, the women wash the plates, put aside the pots which contain the food left for the next morning, and tidy up the yards.

Whatever we may say, the day has been a well-filled one for the women. They are very rarely seen playing in the day time. We shall see how they recuperate themselves in the evening.

II. *Men's occupations.*

As for the men, their life is far from being as active as that of the women. They have not, like their diligent wives, the regular continuous work of preparing the food, not to mention the care of the children. The duties which fall on them, and which they are willing to perform, only require of them isolated efforts from time to time.

As regards *agricultural work*, it is generally believed that men leave this entirely to the women. This is exaggerated. Amongst the Rongas each man possesses his own field which he himself tills, and this is an old custom, a special term even being applied to the field thus tilled: it is called *mpashu*. He may sow seeds in it, but he does not weed it, leaving his wife to do this troublesome work for him and also to reap it. He makes only one exception in the case of the sorghum, of which he consents to go and cut the ears. But he helps his wife in other ways, for instance in the storing of the food; he builds the little huts used as storehouses, prepares the *tjala*, viz., the mat stretched on four poles on which ground nuts are dried in the field, digs holes for the *buhiri*, the shelf at the back of the hut where the basket containing the seeds is placed. His wife does not think him a lazy fellow at all. When the harvest is finished, she takes the smaller cobs of mealies (makunhula), those which will not be kept, or the grains of millet and sorghum which are found on the threshing floor after the threshing, and with them she prepares a special beer to

462 273 thank (tlangela) her husband for his kind help! This is her method of notifying him that all the grain has been harvested, as, whatever the man's share of the work may have been, the mealies belong to him.

462 356 342 The main work of the man is the *building and repairing of the huts*. This is truly an arduous job, but it is not of yearly recurrence. Every third or fourth year they are obliged to re-thatch the roof. The huts are built and repaired during the winter, from May to September.

A second domain, which is exclusively man's, is the *care of the cattle*; the boys milk the cows, construct and repair the kraal: the little boys herd the goats, and the young men the oxen, as has already been mentioned.

462 411 294 It is also the men who *make all the utensils and tools* used in the village, pots and other crockery excepted; mortars, pestles, handles for axes or hoes (mimphinyi), wooden platters, carved or forged articles, all this work pertains to them. They must also make the *ntehe* for their wives, or sisters, after the birth of the babies. This is probably the explanation of the curious fact noticed amongst Native Christians, namely that they are much more clever at needlework than their wives. Big fellows are often seen forsaking the hoe to work with the needle, and there are fathers who make their own clothing as well as the dresses for their wives and children!

462 224 *Hunting and fishing* are, of course, also men's work... or pastime. For some of them hunting is an actual trade, at least such was the case in former times, before the White Governments imposed strict regulations and levied heavy licences on that sport. We shall study, in Part IV, the curious customs relating to these two favourite occupations of the Natives.

574 517 484 A great part of their time is devoted by the men to *paying visits*. They are very fond of calling on each other, and sometimes they go great distances to see relatives or friends. They do not travel to pay visits only, but they frequently journey to claim payment of their debts (milandju). To regain the possession of a miserable head of cattle they willingly lose whole weeks! And what endless discussions in the *hubo*, when an unfortunate visitor

I: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

825 777 484 782 that the road is not "clean" (Viguet). The flesh of this bird is used in the preparation of the charms carried by travellers. There are also two mammals which give the same warning : the duyker antelope (mhunti) and the polecat (mangobo). Should a boy going to Johannesburg meet with any of these three animals, he will go to his kokwana (grandfather) and ask him for help ; the old man will then take a mouthful of beer or water and project it towards the traveller (to make "phaa") with the following prayer addressed to the ancestor-gods : "You, so and so, look to this child who wants to travel! Bless him in his journey! May the Spirit of the bush (Shikwembo sha nhoba) remain asleep."

517 461 The *discussion of affairs* (ku khanela timhaka) on the square of the village also fills many an hour in a man's life.

On the whole, men have but little to do. We can fairly estimate at three months the time required for the work which they have to do for the village and for the community. The remaining months are devoted to pastimes and pleasure (1).

III. *Games of adults.*

000 Having already described boys' and girls' games (p. 66 and 172), I now proceed to those of the adults, as forming an important part of the Life of the Village.

462 (1) Much has been said and written about the division of village work between men and women in the Bantu kraal. I shall try to show in the Practical Conclusions, No. V that civilisation is bound to produce great changes in this region. But, as already pointed out, it is certain that to the Natives themselves their system appears perfectly natural and that the women do not at all complain of their fate. The following charming story which is told by a Moravian missionary, The Rev. Th. Bachmann, who lived for a long time amongst the Wa-Nika, between Lake Tanganyika and Nyassa gives fresh proof of this assertion :

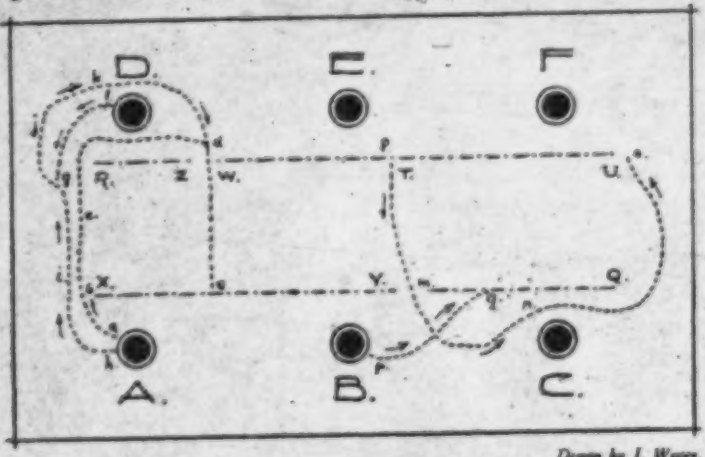
000 One day, as the rain was pouring down, I saw Walusangano returning from his garden with his wife, Leya. The wife was walking in front with a big bundle of wood on her head. On the wood was a basket containing maize, cucumbers and beans, as well as the hoe. On her back Leya was carrying her youngest child. The other children followed and the father brought up the rear-guard, carrying only an open umbrella. We were greatly shocked at this sight, and I thought it my duty to intervene on behalf of the women. On Sunday night, at public worship, I spoke of what I had seen in the most expressive terms possible. But my speech did not make the impression I expected. The men looked very much embarrassed ; the women indignant.

The following week, at sunset, I was under my veranda, watching the lightning and

276
324
317

make the man drunk at once. It is called *shinguandja*, when pure, and is not liked, whilst they say that when it has gone through water, it has an agreeable taste. It makes the smokers cough terribly, but they thoroughly enjoy this exercise.[1] Moreover it excites an abundant flow of saliva which is the chief requisite for their favourite game. They take a hollow grass, called *shenga*, and begin the fight by blowing their saliva through it on to the ground. The simplest form of the game consists in squirting as

524



Drawn by J. Weave.

Illustration of the saliva contest of hemp-smokers.

long streams of saliva as possible. He who squirts the furthest wins. But it is sometimes much more complicated. In the accompanying diagram the reader can follow the wonderful combinations of this game, called *ku tjhuma* or *hlazelana*. There are two sides, each with its pipe. Three men, A. B. C. oppose three others, D. E. F. First of all, each side protects itself by making a saliva fence, line X. Q. for the first side, R. U. for the second. Unhappily for D. E. F. the saliva dries up on the point Z. W. and so their fence is broken. A takes his advantage. He begins to squirt out his saliva on the line *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*..., passes through the opening Z. W., and, having come back victoriously to *e*, he has destroyed all the fortifications R. Z. Suppose D. wants to

1 [i.e., hemp smoking -- Analyst]

but one stone, a poor *tshonga*, he says: "I have only caught women!"

Fighting and hunting are great sports for Natives; hence the popularity of the tshuba game. It has become such a passion with the men that they neglect all their duties to indulge in it, and it has been necessary, in certain Christian villages, to prohibit the tshuba altogether, as the whole male population was abandoning its work for the game!

The *evening games* are happily not so dangerous for the moral well-being of the village. Women who have worked the whole day now have their innings. This is the *tha* par excellence, the most refined amusement, the story telling. It takes place at eventide. It is taboo to *tha* in the middle of the day. Those who should transgress the law would become bald (!), and persons affected with loss of hair are commonly and jocosely accused of having told tales at midday. So, when the moon shines, when all the work of the day is ended, all the inhabitants assemble at one of the firesides to amuse themselves. They rarely gather together on the hubo for that purpose, as the square is reserved for the discussion of matters of importance or for dances. The diversions at first consist of a parlour game, which is also known amongst Europeans, *guessing the charcoal piece (mhumhana)*. Two sides are formed opposite each other, women on one side, men on the other. One of the women, holding a piece of charcoal, puts it into the hands of one of the other partners, saying: "Dana, u shura ñwanaaaa'nga," (eat and be satisfied, my child). Then both present their closed hands to the other side saying: "Mhumha!" The man opposite must guess in which hand the charcoal is hidden. He flips one of the four hands with his finger saying: "Give me! Here it is!" If he has guessed rightly, he has won, and then proceeds in his turn to hide the charcoal in the hand of one of his own side. When they have had enough of this game and wish to finish it in the proper manner, *they pull their fingers* and make them crack *(ku ba tindjwati)*. Each of them pulls a finger in turn. The first who is unable to produce a sound is expelled from his side. Then those who have been beaten make faces, as ugly or funny as they can, at their victors; these must

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

644 the men. However he was allowed to visit it Behind these huts were two passages between poles carefully arranged, one leading to the pig-sties, another to the bush. The photographer was told that this was intended to secure an exit for the queens in case of war... I suppose it had a more common and practical use in every day life! They are the *pitruba* of the queens (p. 311). In the royal kraal these back entrances are taboo.

517 644 It is on the square that the men of the neighbourhood love

343 351

Phot. D' J. de Montmollin

Back gate with hen-house.

to meet in the morning, when they come to pay their respects to the chief ; they sit down in groups and discuss the news of the day ; this is called, as we have seen, "ku ya handla," "to go to the men's square." Everyone is welcome there, not only members of the reigning family, but also those of the clans conquered by the present chiefs, (as the Honwana, Mahlangwane etc., in Nondwane. Page 357). There is no lack of beer, made from maize or millet, when crops have been good, the women frequently bringing brimming jars to the capital ; the daily visits of the men are not therefore altogether disinterested.

273 517 644

533 all their charm. Some are very primitive, like No. 33, the
538 murmuring of a little boy who has been swallowed together with his oxen by an ogre called Nyandzumulandengela ; imprisoned in the stomach of the monster, he entreats him to let him out! Another, more elaborate, is the lament of the mother whose child has been stolen by the Baboon, and who follows the animal weeping and asking it to give the little one back to her. (Tune No. 35.) Tune No. 36 belongs to another ogre tale, concerning the suitors of pretty girls who are really only hyenas transformed into men. Some one knows their true nature, and forces them to appear as they really are, by chanting their song :

Manyanje, the leg belongs to me !

the song in which they dispute with each other about the leg of the girl they are wooing! The most complicated of these songs is that in the tale of Zili (No. 34) ; it is a duet, and was sung to me by two Mpfumo girls so distinctly that I could easily take it down. It is very interesting as an illustration of the laws of harmony amongst the Thongas.

C. FOLK-TALES.

538 Folk-tales are by far the most interesting and valuable part of the Thonga Folklore, and before citing any new examples of those curious and charming stories, I shall try to show their importance in the Life of the Tribe, their literary, ethnographic and philosophic value.

I. *The place occupied by Folk-tales in the Life of the Tribe.*

538 In Vol. I. p. 350, we have seen the inhabitants of the village,
517 after their evening meal, gathered round the fireplace, devoting themselves to innocent amusements ; first, guessing the piece of charcoal, pulling their fingers, asking each other riddles, — those

who are beaten in the contest having to pay a forfeit which they redeem by telling a tale. So the tale is the conclusion of the game, the object of the whole entertainment. I have often seen exactly the same order followed in a European company playing parlour games. 538 517

This interesting scene may be witnessed from one end of the tribe to the other: "This is their evening prayer" said one of our converts to me, a woman who was also a clever story-teller, i. e. as we Christians have our worship every night before going to sleep, so the heathen gladden their hearts by their tales. Everywhere story-telling (ku tha psihitana) is considered the most refined and most pleasing of the games. The tales are called *shihetana* or *nsingo* (mu-mi) in Ronga, *ntyeketo* (mu-mi) or *nkaringana* (mu-mi) in the Northern clans.

Story-tellers are of all ages and of both sexes. I have heard little girls of ten amusing their play-mates with tales. Those I have collected were told by young girls of eighteen (Nkulunkulu and Ñwanawatilo), young men of twenty, (Khwezu, Maganyele, Simeon Makwakwa), and men of thirty and forty (Spoon, Jim Tandane); but the majority come from adult women, the most skillful being Shigiyane-Camilla, Sofia Midomingo, Martha and Lois. Some only know one tale, and repeat it on every occasion, like Jim Tandane, who used to narrate the story of an ogre, Ñwatlakulalambimbi, with such gusto that he was surnamed after his hero! But others can recite six, ten or twenty tales. Shigiyane, for instance, could entertain the company for many nights with her tales, some of which were very long. (See for instance "The little hated one," 24 pages, "Mubia, an ogre tale," 19 pages, in my *Chants et Contes des Ba-Ronga*). This woman's memory was wonderful, and the graceful manner in which she told her stories was no less astonishing. Nkulukulu had heard *her* tale ("The girl and the whale") only once in the Maputju country, and she had memorised it immediately with the little songs which enliven it. 538

Strange to say, there is a curious precaution to be observed in connection with story-telling: it is taboo to devote oneself to this occupation at noon; it must remain an evening entertainment; *if this rule is not followed, the Transgressor will become bald!* 538 461 826